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PRESS RELEASE

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Nebraska Education Community Leaders Convene to Proactively Discuss School Safety Issues *Chairwoman Walz asks for the Creation of a Task Force*

Education Committee Chairwoman Lynne Walz is asking Commissioner Matt Blomstedt to create a comprehensive School Safety Task Force to review current school safety, security, and preparedness practices and identify evidence-based strategies and impactful solutions to ensure Nebraska's schools remain safe.

Chairwoman Walz convened leaders from Nebraska's education community yesterday – in the immediate aftermath of the Texas elementary school shooting – and again today to discuss strategies for proactively moving forward to address school safety issues.

Nebraska's education community stands united in their support of and sympathy for the victims and families of the Uvalde, Texas school shooting. These tragedies are too common in our country and their causes must be confronted.

In Nebraska, we are recommitting our efforts to keep students and educators safe. From mental health supports and the new Safe2Help Report Line, Nebraska schools are committed to early interventions for students in need. Likewise, school buildings are equipped with the necessary infrastructure and personnel as security best practices are studied and shared. Recently, millions in Federal COVID relief aid sent to Nebraska schools was targeted at student welfare and supports.

However, tragic events like those in Uvalde compel us to reinforce the need to be more united than ever. In the coming weeks and months Nebraska education leaders will ask tough questions, process gathered information, listen to experts, and assist schools in doing everything in our power to keep students safe. Every issue and idea are on the table for consideration because, while tragedies like the one in Texas can quickly become political and partisan, the safety of our students is a moral imperative upon which we can all agree.

School shootings underscore the very real dangers of a culture in which gun violence has become too frequent. We grieve for the victims and their families. We are steadfastly committed to ending gun violence and to working with parents, policymakers and all concerned Nebraskans to advocate for and provide safe classrooms for every student and teacher.

“I know our education community is committed to our students, families and educators.” said Chairwoman Walz. “They will continue to ensure our schools are safe and welcoming places where every student can thrive.”

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